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HUNGER PANEL CHARTS TRIENNIAL WORK

DALLAS -- The Episcopal Church's National Hunger Committee has begun a program for the first triennium of the 1980's that includes a unique ecumenical partnership.

The Committee will employ two task forces and an agreement with the non-denominational Bread for the World hunger education organization to help the Church examine land use/worldwide agrarian reform and lifestyle issues and to study the results of the Presidential Hunger Commission.

Meeting at the Bishop Mason Conference Center near here in late November, the Committee re-examined the goals it had set in June in light of a wide-ranging General Convention mandate affirming the commitment of the Church to a role in alleviating hunger and asking the Committee to develop information on land reform. The strategy devised to meet these goals is based on the provincial and diocesan structures that have been developed and were such a key factor in the success of the 1979 Lenten Hunger study.

The newest element in the program is the partnership with Bread for the World. The two have been asked by the federal government to disseminate the results of the national Hunger Commission's report which is expected to be made public in early 1980. The Episcopal Church will thus have a major role in helping ecumenical and other non-governmental organizations respond to the Commission's work.

Through a series of spring workshops, the Committee will bring together the provincial and diocesan leaders to study and plan a response to the federal report and, at the same time, begin to evaluate the report of the Church's energy task force.

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The results of that work will be fed into the task force -- to be led by the Rev. Stephen K. Commins of the Diocese of Los Angeles -- which will be preparing the Committee's proposals on land reform. A Land Use Octave -- including prayer, study material, liturgical and homiletical aids -- will be offered to the Church for use in the fall of 1980.

The proposal will be built around a Creation theme and will allow a congregation to devote a substantial bloc of time and effort to examining the complex and sensitive issues about the way land is held and used.

"The net effect," commented the Hunger Officer, the Rev. Charles A. Cesaretti, "will be to disseminate, quickly and widely, a lot of much-needed information and, we hope, to raise a lot of questions."

The Committee hopes that the Church will take the results of the 1980 work and apply it to an examination of lifestyles that will be the focus of the 1981 work.

The same format -- of spring workshops leading to a fall program -- will be employed. The task force guiding that effort will be convened by Mr. and Mrs. Eric Ebbeson of the Diocese of New Hampshire. Material will be offered to encourage examination of lifestyles at institutional, community and personal levels.

"The General Convention was very clear in asking the Church to examine these issues and find ways in which we can all respond," said Father Cesaretti. "The Committee hopes that the offered plan will encourage the widest possible participation in that initiative. Throughout the Church there are individuals and congregations who can enrich and guide this study and help lead us to action. We are confident that the proposal is both broad enough and intense enough to engage major portions of the Church."

At the same meeting, the Committee named the Rev. J. Fletcher Lowe of the Diocese of Virginia, Mrs. Betty Weeth of the Diocese of Eau Claire and Father Commins to the executive committee.

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